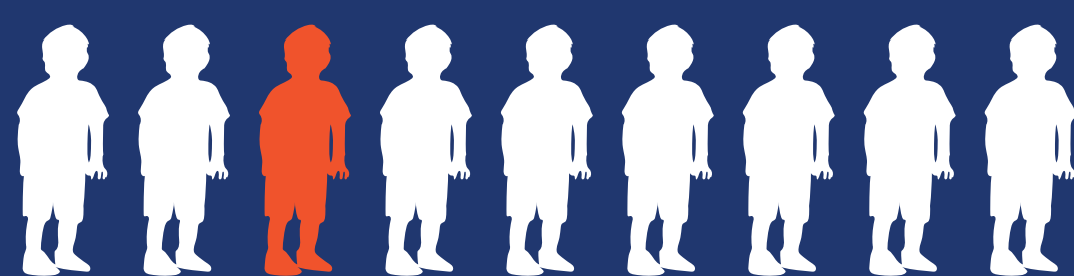


# Preventing Online Grooming

## Tips for Keeping Children Safe

### What is Online Grooming?

Online grooming is when a predator builds a relationship with a child online to sexually exploit them, either offline or online. They gain the child's trust to control them and place them in a sexual exploitation situation.



# 1 in 9

American teens has been sexually solicited online.  
**That is millions of kids.**

(Source: Madigan et al. (2018))

### Who are Most Vulnerable?

It is easier for predators to initial sexual talks with children who are more vulnerable to manipulation and victimization due to:

Low self-esteem issues

Needs for attention

Family problems

### Misconceptions about Online Grooming and Online Predators

- ✗ Online predators ALWAYS pose as children
- ✓ It is not always the case that predators pretend to be another child

- ✗ Online grooming is a LENGTHY process
- ✓ Online grooming can happen alarmingly fast

### Effects of Online Grooming

The psychological impact of online grooming on children can be as severe as those who suffer offline abuse, with some children even attempting or committing suicide.

### How to Prevent Online Grooming?

Online grooming can happen to any child who uses the internet. Here are some tips to help parents and guardians protect their children.

#### Educate children about online dangers:

Make sure children understand the risks of sharing personal information, engaging with strangers online, and sharing inappropriate content.



#### Set clear rules and boundaries:

Establish guidelines for internet use, including time limits, online activities, and parental supervision.



#### Monitor online activity:

Keep track of what your child is doing online, including the websites they visit, the apps they use, and the people they talk to.



#### Use parental controls:

Many devices and apps have parental controls that can limit access to inappropriate content and prevent children from sharing personal information.



#### Encourage open communication:

Create a safe and open environment where children feel comfortable talking about their online experiences and reporting any suspicious activity.



#### Stay informed:

Keep up-to-date with the latest online trends, risks, and safety measures to ensure you're prepared to protect your child.



### Recommendations for All Relevant Professionals

- 1 Children, a person under 18, cannot legally consent to any form of their own sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, including online grooming.
- 2 Children should not be blamed for exploitative or abusive sexual acts committed against them.
- 3 The adult offender is the one responsible for such acts and should be held criminally liable.
- 4 Children who are victims of online grooming are victims of sexual exploitation and, therefore, need protection and services.

### Recommendations for Law and Policy

- 1 Criminalize online grooming when the offender intends to meet a child offline (contact abuse-driven): mostly already criminalized by national law.
- 2 Criminalize online grooming of children, as a standalone offense and understanding it as a process that involve sexual conversations, in which the offender intends to exploit a child online only (non-contact sexual abuse/fantasy-driven).



Report suspicious contacts to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's CyberTipline or 1-800-843-5678.



## Human Trafficking Front